The Tragedy of Karbala

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Translated into English by
Commander (Rtd.) **Muhammad Tufail**

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Foreword

lthough medieval Muslim historians undoubtedly give the impression that Islam has grown into a large number of sects (or parties, firaq), most of these are not "sects" but legal and theological schools, as pointed out by orientalists like Goldzihr. Indeed, throughout the history of Islam one looks in vain for a sect based entirely on doctrinal differences. The doctrinal and theological extremes to which, for example, certain sufis and philosophers went - let alone the Mu'tazila and even the Khawarij - are obviously incompatible with orthodox teaching, and yet this by itself has given rise to sectarian developments. The criterion of the permissibility of a schism in Islam has, rather, been something that can perhaps be best called "community solidarity," and has been characteristically concerned from the beginning with practical and above all political issues.

The Shi'ah constitute the only important schism in Islam. Unlike the Khawarij, who rebelled against the ljma' of the community at the practical level, the Shi'ah have, over the centuries, evolved a doctrine of Divine Right (both with regard to religious and political life) that is irreconcilable with the very spirit of ljma'. The occasion of the Shi'ah secession **was** also the political event of hostility between Ali **(RAA)** and his opponents, the Umayyads. After Ali's **(RAA)** assassination, the Shi'ah (party) of Ali in Kufa demanded that Caliphate be restored to the home of the ill-fated Caliph. This legitimist claim on behalf of Ali's descendants is the beginning of the Shi'ah political doctrine.

The motives that led to this curious legitimist claim on the part of the Kufan Arabs are not very clear, except the fact that certain southern tribes, in their traditional enmity against the Northerners, decided to champion the Hashimites against the ruling Umayyads, and also the fact that the Prophet (SAW) had been from the Banu Hashim came to be easily exploited. This legitimism, i-e., the doctrine that the leadership of the Muslim Community rightfully belongs to Ali **(RAA)** and his descendants, was the hallmark of the original Arab Shi'ism which was purely political. Monuments of this Arab Shi'ism are to be found today among the Zaydis of Yemen with their Shi'ah Imam, and in Morocco where the ruler is a decedent of the house of Ali **(RAA)** but the religion is that of Sunni Islam. But already among the earliest Shi'ah partisans there were strong traces of a religious enthusiasm for Ali **(RAA)** combined with the political motive, although there was not as yet the dogmatic extravagance that was to develop in the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries. The social struggles in early Islam, when the discontent of Persian clients (Mawali) was broiling against the ruling Umayyads, gave undoubtedly a further spur and quite a new turn to the socio-political activities of the Shi'ah.

Thus, we see that Shi'ism became, in the early history of Islam, a cover for different forces of social and political discontent. The fundamental religious impulse was derived from the violent and bloody death of Hussain (RAA), Ali's son from Fatima **(RAA)** at **Karbala** at the hands of government troops in the year 61 A.H. (681 **C.E.)** whence the passion motive was introduced. h i lpassion

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motive combined with the belief in the "return" of the Imam gives to Shi'ism its most characteristic ethos. From the verv

beginning, however, the practice of moderation and catholicity of spirit, which had created the Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, i.e., the orthodoxy, developed into a theoretical and doctrinal principle, according to which although "there can be no obedience to sinful command," yet "the ruler should be obeyed even though he be unjust" for "an unjust ruler is better than lawlessness." Therefore the charge of conformism against the Ulama as a whole seems justified, and the principle of "obedience even to a tyrant" was often carried to its extremes. It is, nevertheless, true that this political wisdom of the Ulama has done a fundamental service to the community which cannot be underscored. For, under the cover of this principle, the Ulama exercised a stabilizing function in the political chaos especially after the break-up of the Abbasid Caliphate when the adventurer sultans had to, at least externally, observe the Shari'ah (whose guardians were the Ulama) which checked their excesses and kept their rule generally humane.

The contents of this booklet mainly consist of a speech delivered by Dr. **Israr Ahmad**, Ameer of Tanzeem-e-Islami, on 8th of Muharram Al-Haram (the first month of the Islamic calendar). The speech was delivered in Darussalam Mosque, Lahore, and was later published in Meesaq, the monthly magazine and the organ of Tanzeem-e-lsalmi. After a persistent demand from the readers, the speech was published in the form of a booklet under the title Saniha-e-**Karbala**.

The substance of the booklet is an endeavor to reveal the real background of the **tragedy** of **Karbala** and to lay bare the events leading to a series of tragedies in the Islamic history. The **tragedy** taken in a distorted perspective has led to tremendous confusion about the conflicts of the

Companions of the Holy Prophet (SAW). It gavearise to a separate sect in Islam, the Shi'ah. It is necessary for every Muslim to be aware of the real background of the events in order to avoid distorted concepts about the Companions of the Holy Prophet (SAW), as it is a part of our faith to show due respect to them all and consider everyone of them free from perversion of intention in their actions.

The Urdu booklet was translated into English by Commander (td.) Muhammad Tufail. May Allah (SWT) accept the efforts of the author and the translator and make it effective in dispelling misconception from the minds of Muslims.

Dr. Absar **Ahmad**
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n the **10th** of Muharram Al-Haram, 61 A.H., a most abominable and tragic event occurred in the desert of **Karbala** that resulted in the martyrdom ***(shahadah)*** of Hussain Ibn Ali **(RAA),** the grandson of our Prophet (SAW) and the son of his daughter, along with most of the members of his family and their supporters. It

should be borne in mind that this **tragedy** did not take place all of a sudden like a bolt from the blue. It was in fact the manifestation of the plot of ***Sabayees*** which had claimed the life of Uthman **(RAA),** the third Caliph and the son-in-law of the Prophet (SAW) twenty-five years earlier. Caliph Uthman's **(RAA)** martyrdom took place on 18th of Dhu Al-Hajj, 36 A.H.

We must not overlook the fact that the struggle between the forces of good and evil is a continuous process which never ends. In the history of mankind, evil has reigned supreme most of the time whereas the triumph of good has been sporadic and short-lived. Another well-established fact is that the evil forces, even if subdued and subjugated, never acknowledge total defeat. On the contrary, they become submissive for a while and lay low, waiting for an opportunity to strike back. Often the evil forces, when subdued, go underground but never abandon their struggle to cause rift and strife among their opponents. The Prophet of Islam (SAW) brought about an incomparable and unprecedented revolution in the history of mankind, a unique miracle for all times, and established a

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state and government to dispense justice to the people over a vast tract of the globe. In the words of the Qur'an:

> ...the Truth came and the falsehood vanished ...
> (AI-Isra 17:81)

But toward the end of the Prophet's revolution,. the evil forces put on a disguise and lay low, waiting for the right moment for a counter-attack. Thus, immediately after the demise of the Prophet (SAW), insurgencies raised their ugly heads against the Islamic state. False prophets and defiants

of *Zakat* challenged the central authority and waged wars against the state of Al-Madinah Al-Munawwara. These were the counter-revolutionary forces, determined to disintegrate the newly established Islamic state; but through resolute and prompt action, Abu Bakr Siddique (RAA), the first Caliph, defeated them and consolidated the achievements of the Prophet's Islamic Revolution. It was a great service to Islam rendered by'the first Caliph who had a short but glorious reign.

In the next twenty years which include the reigns of Omar (RAA) and Uthman **(RAA),** the second and third Caliph of Islam, many more countries were conquered under the banner of Islam and the Muslim empire extended over a vast expanse of the globe, comprising Iraq, Syria, Iran on one side and a large part of North Africa including Egypt and Morocco on the other. But the historical process has its immutable laws. As the Revolution of the Prophet (SAW) was challenged by the reactionay movements on the Arab land, the same happened with the conquests of those

two Caliphs. The first target of these reactionaries was the person of Omar **(RAA)** who was assassinated by Abu Luloo Feroze, a Parsi slave from Iran. It was purely an Iranian plot hatched by Hurmuhn, an Iranian general, who thought that if Omar **(RAA)** was removed from the scene, the empire of Islam would fall lie a house of cards. But by the grace of Allah **(SWT),** it survived the calamity. Abdullah Ibn Saba, a Jew from Yemen, under .the garb of a Muslim, took his sojourn at Madinah. He had all the trappings of an expert plotter and the Jewish genius at intrigues, an attribute of his clan. He planted subversive ideas among the people. He pleaded for the usurped rights of the house of the Prophet (SAW), carried out a propaganda campaign against Caliph Uthman **(RAA)** and incited the people to revolt. He declared Ali (RAA) to be the rightful successor to the Prophet

Muhammad (SAW) and dubbed Uthman **(RAA)** as a usurper. He told people that every Prophet has a wasee and Ali (RAA) is the wasee of Prophet Mohammad (SAW) and, therefore, entitled to be the caliph after the Prophet. He also preached the divinity of Ali **(RAA),** thus striking at Tauheed, the very root of Islam. The Iranians, who had embraced Islam only a few years before, were taken in by this propaganda because they had a long history of kingship and hero-worship. They were familiar with the divine rights of kings, and hero-worship was diffused iri their blood. They readily accepted these ideas and became their champions. Similarly Abdullah Ibn Saba floated another viewpoint related to the second appearance of Prophet Isa (AS). He argued that Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who is the best amongst the prophets of Allah (SWT), would also appear

with Christ, for the contrary would imply that i-le is inferior to Prophet **Isa** (AS). This was the same argument used by the Qadianis in later years, who invented the notion of the death and burial of Prophet Isa (AS) in Kashmir. They argued that it was illogical for Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to have died and for Prophet Isa (AS) to be alive in the heaven. Unsophisticated and illiterate Muslims saw a point of adoration in it for Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and fell an easy prey to that sort of propaganda.

Abdullah Ibn Saba travelled all over the Muslim lands and set up his propaganda centers at Basra and Kufa, but his attempts failed in Damascus. Then he went to Egypt where he formed a party of his supporters. Consequently, the last two years of Caliph Uthman's **(RAA)** reign were filled with machinations, intrigue, and turmoil all over Muslim territories. It culminated in the most unjustified murder (martyrdom) of Caliph Uthman **(RAA)** who was the ruler of a vast empire and had tens of thousands of soldiers

under his command but refused to shed the blood of Muslims in self-protection. Governors of provinces from all over the empire besought the Caliph to allow them to send troops to quell the uprising and to protect his person from the rebels who had surrounded his residence, but he remained strict and steadfast in his decision. It is perhaps a unique and unprecedented episode in the entire history of mankind that a very powerful man, like the Caliph Uthman **(RAA),** refused to use authority for his personal safety and let himself be assassinated. May Allah **(SWT)** shower His blessings on him.

The murder of Habeel (son of Adam) by his brother Qabeel is perhaps an incident comparable to Caliph Uthman's **(RAA)** assassination. When Qabeel 'declared **hi** intention to kill Habeel, the latter announced his resolve, in the words of the Qur'an:

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(A: I 3,I Sf d. '4 9

Even if thou stretch out thy hand against me, I shall not stretch out my hand against thee to kill thee; lo! I fear Allah the Lord of the worlds. (Al-Ma'ida **5:28)**

So, Habeel was assassinated by his brother and that was the first act of homicide in the history of mankind. It **was** a totally unjustified murder in which the victim refused to offer resistance as in the .assassination of Caliph Uthman **(RAA).** For such an act, Allah **(SWT)** has declared His reward and punishment in the Qur'an:

For that cause We decreed for the children of
Israel that whosoever killeth a human being for
other than mandaughter of corruption in the
earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind,
and saveth thk life of oie person, it shall be as if
he had saved the life of all mankind ...
(Al-Ma'ida **5:32).**

Before Caliph Uthman's assassination, Abdullah Ibn Salam **(RAA),** a Jewish scholar who had converted to Islam, addressed the rebels surrounding the residence of the Caliph in these words: ***"0*** people! beware of murdering a caliph of a ***Rasool*** (Messenger of Allah) for, I am a scholar of Torah and I tell you that Allah avenges the murder of His prophets and the murder of the deputies of **hi** prophets (caliphs). There has hardly been any murder of a prophet which Allah has not avenged by inflicting death on seventy thousand people and the murder of a caliph by inflicting death on thirty five thousand people." Now it is on record that, after the martyrdom of Uthman **(RAA),** the conflict and strife among the Muslim continued for almost five years. Civil war broke out and three major battles **- Jamal,** Siffeen and Nahrwan **-** were fought, causing eighty-four thousand deaths of Muslims at the hands of other Muslims. Many a pious and good Muslims were slain by the sword of fellow Muslims. Amongst them were eminent Companions like Talha **(RAA),** Zubair (RAA), Ammar Ibn Yasir **(RAA)** and many more. Ali (RAA), the fourth Caliph, also sacrificed his life in this strife. Ameer Mu'awiya **(RAA)** was also attacked but sunrived. Amar Ibn Al-Aas (m) survived a murder attempt due to an alibi; his proxy was killed instead. The schism and strife among the Muslims caused by Abdullah Ibn Saba **and** his followers claimed countless

valuable lives.

An instance from the authenticated record of the battle of Jamal is narrated here to illustrate how Muslims fell victims to the traps laid by the Sabayees. After the occupation of Basra, **Umm AI-Momineen** Ayisha **(RAA)**

received a message from Caliph Ali **(RAA)** for talks and negotiation. It should be remembered that she was never a claimant for the caliphate. Her only demand wds that the murderers of Uthman **(RAA)** must be punished immediately. **Ali (RAA)** offered to accept her demand if his hands were first strengthened by a declaration of allegiance to him by her group. Both the armies of Ayisha **(RAA)** and Ali **(RAA)** were facing each other and camping on the battle field when these negotiations started. The news of ihis negotiation reached Abdullah Ibn Saba and Malik Ibn Ashter Nakhey. They immediately pursued their nefarious plot to undermine the peace talks. Accordingly, under the cover of darkness, they, along with some of their followers, mounted an attack on UrnrnAl-Momineen Aisha's **(RAA)** camp and the rumor was spread that the attack was made by the forces loyal to Ali **(RAA).** At the same time, they sent the word to Ali's **(RAA)** camp that Umm Al-Momineen Ayisha's **(RAA)** forces had initiated the attack. Consequently the opposing armies clashed with each other with all their might, leaving thousands dead on the battle field. It is a very painful part of Muslim history that no investigation to discover the truth in time was ever successful. The same thing happened at the battle of Siffeen. When a stage for peaceful negotiations was set, the **Sabayees** undermined it and a new scion of dissidents, the Khawarij, appeared.on the scene, opening another front for the warring factions.

During the reign of Caliph l i**(RAA),** the Muslim empire did not exit as a single state under one central

authority but broke up into various power centers. Ameer Mu'awiya **(RAA),** the governor of Syria, demanded avenge

of Uthman's (RAA) murder. "The assassins of Uthman **(RAA)** are in your camp and they are your advisers. I will not declare allegiance to you unless they are punished," he insisted. It should be borne in' mind that Ameer Mu'awiya **(RAA)** did not put $orward his claim to the Caliphate and was contented with the governorship of Syria. Whether his demand and pressure on Ali (RAA) was justified or not is an open issue, and everyone is entitled to have an opinion.

Caliph Ali **(RAA)** was killed by a Khariji, and his son Hassan (RAA) accepted the allegiance of the people at Kufa, a big army base. It appeared that another conflict was in the making. Hassan Ibn Ali **(RAA),** leading a forty thousand strong contingent, marched to Medinah where he had to confront Ameer Mu'awiya **(RAA),** the governor of Syria, who faced him with a huge army. A small squad was leading the army of Hassan (RAA). It was rumored that the squad had a clash with the enemy and suffered a defeat. The persons responsible for spreading this rumor were never identified. Upon hearing the rumor, the Kufi forces revolted against Hassan **(RAA)** and not only looted his camp but also manhandled him. He had to take refuge in Chosroes' palace. But this incident shook the confidence of Hassan Ibn Ali (RAA) in his Kufi supporters; he therefore sent a word to Ameer Mu'awiya (RAA) for peace talks. Ameer Mu'awiya **(RAA)** not only acceptedathe offer but also sent a blank cheque, so to say, for a settlement in accordance with the terms of Hassan (RAA), who laid down the following conditions:

1. The tax collections from the province of Ahwaz shall be paid to Hassan **(RAA).**

2. A grant of two million dirham shall be paid annually to **Hussain** (RAA), his younger brother.
3. Banu Hashim shall be preferred in the distribution of allowances and grants.
4. A general amnesty shall be declared for all who took part in the battle.

Arneer Mu'awiya (RAA) accepted all these terms and peace was restored in the sprawling empire. Strife and civil war came to an end and the state was unified under one central authority as he forced allegiance from all the dissidents. Hassan Ibn Ali **(RAA),** commenting on the transfer of authority, said, "If Mu'awiya was the rightful successor to the Caliphate, he has received it and if I had that right, I, too, have passed it on to him; so the matter ends there." This was in accordance with the prophecy of the Holy Prophet (SAW) about Hassan **(RAA)** when he had said, "Through my son Hassan, Allah will bring about peace between tow waning factions of Muslims." It was an honor bestowed on Hassan Ibn Ali **(RAA)** by Allah (SWT), but the Sabayees were highly indignant at his peace move. They called him names and taunted him with the words ***"Yo***Aar Al-Momeneen" ***(0,*** Shame for the believers!) and "Ya Mozill Al-Momineen " (You, the debaser of the Believers!). Ostensibly they were his supporters, but in fact expressed their utter resentment at his action for peace making which ushered in an era of twenty years of unity and tranquility in the Muslim empire.

Muslims belonging' to Ah1 Al-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah (the Sunni sect of Islam) do not include Ameer Mu'awiya's

(RAA) reign in Al-Khilafah A/-Rashidah (the period of Rightly Guided Caliphate). But Ameer Mu'awiya's **(RAA)** twenty years reign is still considered to be the best period in the entire Muslim history after Al-Khilafah A/-Rashidah, because during his reign all the functions of a 'uslim state - maintenance of peace, dispensation of justice, struggle for the supremacy of Islam, dissemination of the Word of Allah (SWT) - were performed admirably well. The reign of Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz **(RA)** is also considered a glorious era of Islamic history, but it should be borne in mind that Ameer Mu'awiyah **(RAA)** - who was not only a Companion of the Holy Prophet (SAW) but also a scribe of Divine Revelation - stands much higher in rank and status than Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz **(RAA)** because the latter was a **Taba'yee** (a companion of the Companions of the Prophet) and not a Sahabi. It is the common belief of the Sunnis +at however pious a person may be, he cannot be rated equal to the lowest among the Companions of the Prophet (SAW).

Hassan Ibn Ali **(RAA)** lived for ten years during the reign of Ameer Mu'awiya (RAA), and aftei the peace agreement between the two, they had a very close and friendly relationship. However, Hassan **(RAA)** was poisoned to death, most probably by the same group who were enraged at his armistice with Ameer Mu'awiya (RAA). By no stretch of imagination this heinous deed can be ascribed to Ameer Mu'awiya (RAA) who had no grudge against Hassan **(RAN.**

Before we discuss the nomination of Yazeed as a successor to his father, it would be appropriate to

understand some basic and relevant issues. Firstly, the differences in belief (aqeeda) and juristic interpretation ***Ifiqh)***

among the various sects of the Muslim Ummah have been grossly exaggerated. The Sunnis have no disagreement regarding belief, and have only some minor differences over the interpretation of the Shari'ah. In fact, there are only two sects in Islam, i-e,. Sunni and Shi'ah, because they differ over beliefs as well as over the interpretation of Shari'ah. There are certain differences which do not cause the parting of ways. For instance, opinions about historical events and personalities can be overlooked. If one considers Ali **(RAA)** better than Abu Bakr **(RAA),** one can do so because it does not contravene **any** basic tenet of Islam. Similarly, the Sunnis believes Abu Bakr **(RAA)** the best among the entire mankind after the prophets of Allah **(SWT)**, yet this does not constitute any basic article of faith of a Muslim. However, the concept of the infallible Imamate maintained by the Shi'ahs is unacceptable because it strikes at the very root of the concept of Prophethood. Only the prophets were continuously guarded against and protected by Allah (SWT) from any sin, and with the termination of Prophethood the privilege of infallibility has been taken away by Allah (SWT) from all the progeny of Adam. The door of personal judgment (fitihad) is .open while the door of Divine Revelation ***(Nabuwwah)*** has been closed forever.

ljtihad, the exercise of personal judgment within the framework of the guidance provided by the Qur'an and the ***Sunnah*** (the sayings and doings of the Prophet) is a privilege vouchsafed to every Muslim who is well-versed in

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the teachings of Islam. The possibility of an error of judgment can never be ruled out because to err is human. But any judgement or decision made in good faith and with a clear conscience has a reward for the judge, regardless of the correctness of the judgment. That is the belief of the

Muslim *Ummah.* In the light of this principle, we can judge . the actions of all the caliphs of Islam to be without malice and can hold any opinion we like provided it is not derogatory to their status as the Companions of the Prophet (SAW).

Now let us look at the issue of Yazeed's nomination by his father, Ameer Mu'awiya (RAA), as an heir-apparent to the caliphate. According to authentic historical records, it was done on the advice of Moghira Ibn Sho'ba **(RAA),** who was a very intelligent and far-sighted Companion of the Holy Prophet (SAW). He argued that on the death of Ameer Mu'awiya **(RAA),** the issue of his succession, if remained uncertain, might plunge the *Ummah* once again into a war as had happened in the pre-Mu'awiya period; hence it was advisable to nominate a person to wield authority in the event of Ameer Mu'awiyah's death. He also suggested the name of Ameer Mu'awiya's son Yazeed for the job. Now it is cpen to question whether this decision was justified or not, but no aspersions should be cast on Ameer Mu'awiya **(RAA)** or Moghira (RAA) who anived at the conclusion with a clear conscience and ih good faith. Both occupy venerable positions in the order of merit of the Companions of the Prophet. Moghira **(RAA)** was one of those who swore allegiance to the Prophet (SAW) under the tree (on the occasion of ***Baiy'ah A/-Ridwan)*** and Allah

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(SWT) has commended all of them who took part in that (AI-Qur'an: Al-Fath **48:lS).** He remained a faithful friend and supporter of Ali **(RAA)** throughout his life. But much water had flown under the bridge since Ali's **(RAA)** times and he could apprehend danger in the absence of most of the influential Companions of the Holy Prophet (SAW) who had died by the'n (60 A.H.). The new generation did not have that sense of responsibility or moral embellishment as

the old had. In view of such arguments, they took a decision counter to the democratic spirit inculcated by the Prophet (SAW) among. his followers. Nevertheless, they cannot be condemned as having ulterior motives of their own, apart from the good of the ***Ummah,*** because the Sunnis believe in the diction which asserts:

All Companions of the Prophet were just.

We can differ with the Companions, but we cannot malign them as ***mala fide.***

Now look at the other side of the picture. Many prominent dignitaries among the Muslims including the three ***lbad*** Allah - i.e., Abdullah Ibn Zubair **(RAA),** Abdullah Ibn Omar **(RAA),** Abdullah Ibn Abbas **(RAA).** as also Hussain Ibn Ali **(RAA)** and AMur Rehman Ibn Abu Bakr **(RAA)** . - not only disapproved of Yazeed's nomination but also declared it against the spirit of Islam. The historic comment of Abdur Rehman Ibn Abu Bakr **(RAA),** when he was asked for allegiance *to Yazeed's heirship, is well worth taking note of. He said, "Now instead of acting upon the Prophet's (SAW) and the rightly

guided Caliphs' tradition, do you want to adopt the tradition of Caesar **and** Chosroes?" Also: the fad cannot be overlooked that, except these five prominent Muslims, many others, including a large number of the Companions of the Prophet (SAW), swore allegiance to Yazeed's nomination. All these people cannot be maligned and declared mala fide. Some may even allege that Ameer Mu'awiya **(RAA)** bought their loyalties. If we accept this premise, by the same token it can also be alleged that Hassan Ibn Ali **(RAA)** too was bought over, andthe Shi'qhs consider Hassan **(RAA)** to be an Imam ***Masoom*** (an

infallible guide or leader). Obviosly this is not the right course of thought and argument because, if pursued to the logical conclusion, it would tarnish many. illustrious names among the Muslims. The only right conduct for us could be to absolve all those who supported Yazeed as well as those who opposed him of all blame because they all acted according to their convictions and for the good of the Muslim Umma h.

Now let us examine the stand which Hussain Ibn Ali **(RAA)** took in the situation. As said earlier, he sincerely believed that the nomination of Yazeed to the heirship of the Caliphate would destroy the spirit of democracy and republicanism nurtured and developed so assiduously during the Prophet's era and afterward, and that i't would lead to hereditary kingship which was repugnant to the original political teaching of Islam. He therefore resolved -to oppose this with all the resources at his command. The bag load of communications, sent to him by the people of Kufa, not only approved of his stand but also promised suppoi and

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loyalty to his cause. Kufa was a military base and a very strategic city situated at the crossroads to Iran and Syria. He thought that if the people of Kufa supported him, as their letters written to him indicated; it would be possible to effectively neutralize the change being brought about in the body politic of the Muslim ***Umrnah.*** So he argued and resolved to act for that cause. Abdglah Ibn Abbas (RAA) also shared his thoughts but he opposed Hussain's (RAA) going to Kufa because he knew the Kufis better and warned him not to repose his confidence in their loyalty. The Kufis had earlier betrayed Ali (RAA) and his son Hassan **(RAA).** Abdullah Ibn Omar (RAA) and Abdullah Ibn Zubair **(RAA)** also had similar opinions about the Kufi character and vehemently besought Hussain (RAA) not to depend on their words would be against him: "Under the slightest pressure

words would be against him," Under the slightest pressure
or pecuniary coercion the Kufis would change their
loyalties," the three *Ibad* Allah warned Hussain (RAA). But
he appeared to have taken a firm decision. So he brushed
aside all their' pleadings and warnings, and decided to
proceed to Kufa, placing his confidence in **Allah (SWT)**. For
he acted in the true spirit of Allah's and the Prophet's
command:

> So when you have decided (on a course of action)
> repose your confidence in Allah (Aal-e-lmran
> 3: 159).

It may be argued that Hussain **(RAA)** committed a
mistake in the assessment of the situation, but no
insinuations about his intentions can be entertained. He had

,no lust for power or avarice for wealth. This is the common
belief of the ***W*** Al-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah (the Sunnis). Thy
do .not consider him, like all non-Prophets, to be .infallible;
at the same time they do not doubt his integrity either.

When the omination issue was deliberated upon in
Madinah, Abdullah Ibn Zubair **(RAA)** went over to **Makkah**
and so did Hussain **(RAA), because** some Muslim
were of the opinion that **Makkah** would' be the best place as
a stronghold or base for launching a campaign fpr building
up public opinion against Yazeed's heii-ship. However,
before any significant work could be done in this regard,
Ameer Mu'awiya **(RAA)** died **and** Ameer Yazeed took over
the reigns of government. Now Hussain **(RAA)** received
heaps of letters from the Kufis pledging their loyalty and
support to him if he mounted an attack against Ameer
Yazeed's forces. He sent his cousin Muslim Ibn Aqeel **(RAA)**
to Kufa to find out facts: Soon he received an affirmation of

the loyalty .of Kufis from his cousin and he staked preparations for a journey to Kufa. Abdullah Ibn **Omar** (RAA) and Abdullah Ibn Abbas **(RAA)** pleaded vigorously against his plan and entreated him to at least leave women and children in Makkah if he was determined to proceed to Kufa. But Hussain **(RAA)** ignored their suggestions. On the way he received the report of Muslim Ibn Aqeel's **(RAA)** death at the hands of Ameer Yazeed's men and the apathy and indifference displayed by the people of Kufa at this incident, and also the news that the Kufis had shifted their loyalties to Ameer Yazeed, pledging support to him agaihst Hussain (RAA) and his followers.

Now Hussain **(RAA) was** in a dilemma: should he continue his jowney towards Kufa or return to **Makkah?** The Arab tradition of avenging the murder of their man, at all costs, was too strong for hi to resist. Besides, the close relatives of Muslim Ibn Aqeel **(RAA),** who were accompanying Hussain (RAA), declared their resolve to punish the assassins and continue their march. For Hussain **(RAA),** it was below his dignity to abandon them and return to Makkah. So, he decided to continue hi march to Kufa. Meanwhile Auon and Mohammad, the two young sons of Abdullah Ibn Jaffer Tayyar, a cousin of Hussain **(RAA),** arrived with their father's message: "For God's sake, don't go to Kufa." However, Hussain (RAA) continued his journey with these two boys joining his camp and arrived at the desert of **Karbala**. Ibn Ziad, the governor of Kufa, arrived there with one thousand soldiers under his command and offered one option to Hussain **(RAA)** in accordance with the instruction from Ameer Yazeed: "You can neither go to Kufa nor return to Makkah, but you can go any where else you want." Obviously, the only course open for Huss'ain **(RAA)** was to Damascus, the capital. It is very .unfortunate

that he turned down the offer and continued his sojourn at **Karbala** tying to win over the support of Ibn Ziad's men because in his addresses to the Kufis under Ibn Ziad's command, he mentioned the persons by name yrho had written letters to him pledging loyalty and support and pleaded with them to honor their pledges. The Kufis, fearing the possibility of ensuing persecution and punishment, disowned their letters and. denied their authorship.

Meanwhile, a reinforcement of four thousand soldiers, under the command of Amar Ibn Sa'd, arrived at Kufa from Damascus. Amar was the son of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas **(RAA),** the conqueror of Im, and was also related to Hussain **(RAA)** for whom he had all the sympathies. Talks of reconciliation continued but the Kufis, fearing reprisals in case of a reconciliation, forced their leader Ibn Zaid to toughen his attitude. Realizing this, Hussain **(RAA)** placed three options before them: "Allow me to return to Makkah safely, or allow me to proceed to the frontiers of the Muslim empire so that I may continue my campdgn against non-Muslims, or allow me a safe passage to the capital, Damascus, where I may settle the issue witl-1 Ameer Yazeed in person."

The conspirators, however, succeeded in undermining the reconciliation talks and forced Amar Ibn Sa'd to comer **Hussain (RAA).** "Either surrender unconditionally or get ready for war," they demanded. Obviously an unconditional surrender by Hussain **(RAA)** was a tall order and a challenge to his honor and dignity. He was constrained to fight the enemy though heavily outnumbered and under-quipped. Thus, the ***Sabayee*** conspiracy that sabotaged the peace talks **just** before the battles of Jamal and Siffeen was successful once again, and

Hussain **(RAA)** and all his camp followers were slain mercilessly on the sands of **Karbala**. However, ald of them displayed unflinching courage and valor on the battle-field.

In apportioning blame for this **tragedy**, fictitious stories have been fabricated about the disagreements between Ali **(RAA)** and Uthrnan **(RAA).** In fact, there were

no disagreements between the two, who respected and loved each other like brothers. It is again the ***Sabayee*** elements who concocted bogus stories and phony events to cover up their own heinous acts of perfidy in this drama of strife and' partisan-politics forced on the Muslims. No attempt has ever been made to unmask their ugly faces and instead their version of these episodes has been accepted as authentic, resulting in deep malignity against the highly venerable and illustrious personalities of the companio& of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

From the assassination of Uthman **(RAA)** right up to the tragic event at **Karbala**, one can easily discern the hidden hand of Sabayee agents who successfully plotted against the solidarity of the Muslim Empire and plunged in into senseless bloodshed. The entire blame must be placed on them, where it rightfully belongs, and the fair names of the Companions of the Prophet (SAW), who are all adool (scrupulously just), must be exonerated from the calumny and ignominy to which they have been exposed through the malicious propaganda of the Sabayees.

It would be worthwhile to mention here two instances of fair play and God-fearing conduct of Ali **(RAA)** and Ameer Yazeed. When Ali (RAA) defeated ***Umm Al-Momineen*** Ayisha (RAA) at the battle of Jamal, he treated her with the same reverence and decorum to which she was entitled as one of the "Mothers of the Believers." He conducted her and her retinue of ladies and gentlemen with all the respect and security to Madinah. This amply

all the respect and security to Madinah. This amply demonstrates that there was no personal enmity or malice between the two. Again, when the battle survivors, ladies,

and children from Hussain's (RAA) camp of **Karbala** arrived at Damascus, Ameer Yazeed treated them with due regard and respect and expressed his sympathies with them. He also expressed his sincere condolences at the needress bloodshed and said, "Had Ibn Ziad not gone to such an extent, I would have been pleased with him even then."

The two martyrdoms, that of Uthman (RAA) and of Hussain (RAA), have caused agony in the hearts of the Muslim ***Ummah*** and have cast their gloomy shadows over its fourteen hundred year history. The have caused dissension and fighting among the Muslims who have fallen into the trap of those who sowed the seeds of discord and shifted the blame to the most respected persons of the ***Ummah.*** It is, in fact, the triumph of those intriguing elements who were jubilant over their accomplishment. Now, we are at each other's throat and hurl bad names and odium on the vey honorable personalities of Islam. Some people consider names of Ykzeed and Shimer a symbols of profanity and an anathema while some others use Amar Ibn Sa'd's and Ameer Mu'awiya's (RAA) names as expletives. May Allah guide such people to the right course and protect us from sharing their company or views and give us the wisdom and strength to heed Prophet's warning:

Beware of expressing opinions about my Companions and, after 1 am gone, do not use

them for your own ends, for whosckver will love them would do so because of their love for me and whosoever would have rancor against them, wodd do so because of their rancor against me.